

## Kentucky Mining Fatalities

Miners become safer from illness, injury, and death as improved safety technologies are developed and adapted by the mining industry. From 1920-29, 1,614 Kentucky miners were killed on the job. During 1990-99, 116 mining fatalities were recorded. (In 1997, and again in 1999 and 2001, Kentucky mines experienced their lowest number of fatalities—5.)

Other sectors may employ more people, but it is still important to note the number of fatalities each year is lower in coal mines than at many other Kentucky workplaces. (See the table to the right.)

KENTUCKY CATEGORY	Average fatalities per year *
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	25.0
Transportation and Public Utilities	21.3
Construction	19.2
Manufacturing	16.7
Government	12.8
Services	10.3
Wholesale and Retail Trades	9.7
Coal Mining	8.7
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	1.2

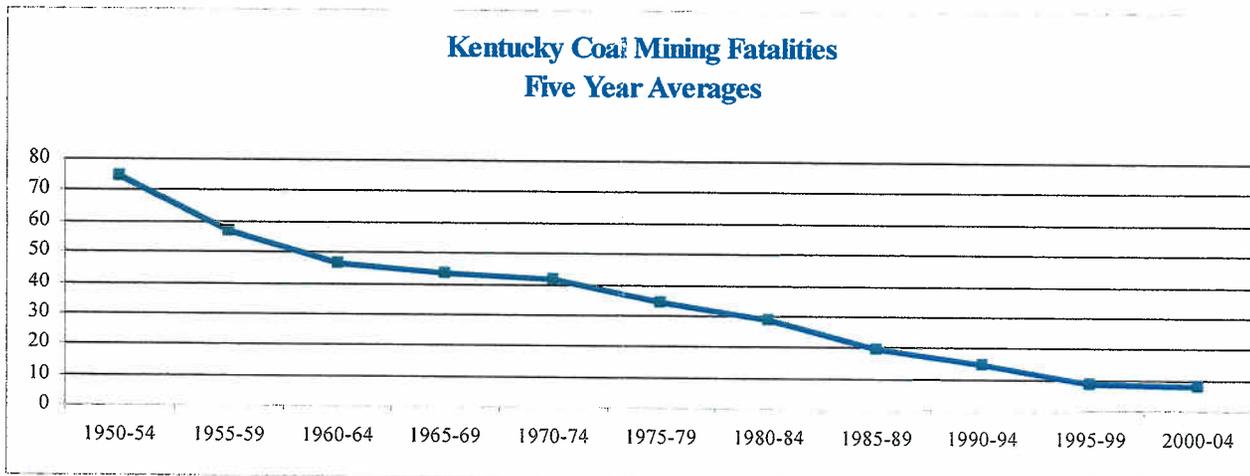
\*Fatalities as reported by Kentucky Department of Labor at [www.labor.ky.gov/osh/pubs/](http://www.labor.ky.gov/osh/pubs/).

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# COAL COUNTS

## Safety Is First In Kentucky Mines



\*Statistics from the Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing (formerly the Kentucky Department of Mines and Minerals).



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## How safe are Kentucky's mines?

Kentucky coal miners typically experience fewer work-related injuries and illness than many other Kentucky workers. The U.S. Department of Labor annually compiles work-related injury and illness statistics\*, expressed as an incidence rate (the number of injuries/illnesses per 100 workers). Since 1996, the average annual incidence rate for Kentucky miners was 8.21. The average annual incidence rate for all Kentucky workers during the same period was 8.24. Employees in the following categories experienced more injuries and illness in an average year than did Kentucky's coal miners: manufacturing, construction, agriculture/forestry/fishing, and transportation/public utilities. (See the table to the right.)

\*Incidence statistics can be found at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov).

## What's the next step to safer mines?

The number of fatalities and injuries in Kentucky's coal mines continues to decline. However, the industry has yet to reach the goal of "Zero fatalities." Behavior modification is the key to insuring miners know and want to do their work in a safe manner.

To affect behavior modification takes time, commitment, and money. The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration is charged with the primary responsibility of enforcing safety rules in coal mines. Kentucky recently adopted its own enforcement laws, duplicating the federal effort. Can't our valuable resources be better used to improve miners' safety? We think yes.

### Kentucky Mine Safety and Health, 1990-2003\*

Category	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003
No. of Mines	1,769	1,197	605	737	648	564
No. of Miners	41,761	30,805	17,150	19,647	16,851	15,669
Tons Produced (mm)	179.37	157.79	131.8	138.2	131.4	115.7
Fatalities	20	11	12	5	7	9

\*Statistics from the Annual Report of the Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing (formerly the Kentucky Department of Mines and Minerals).

KENTUCKY CATEGORY	1996-2002 Average Annual Injury and Illness Rate *
Manufacturing	13.2
Construction	9.0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	8.5
Transportation and Public Utilities	8.3
Private Industry	8.24
<b>Coal Mining</b>	<b>8.21</b>
Wholesale and Retail Trades	6.7
State and Local Government	6.3
Service Providers	6.0
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	1.8

\*The most current years for which comparable data is available from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Kentucky mine safety authorities' primary role should be miner training and education, although inspectors should retain the power to close an unsafe mine. Writing a citation which duplicates one written by a federal agency doesn't make the mine a safer workplace. But, activities to observe the miner and correct unsafe work habits can lead to safer mines. As teachers, rather than policemen, state inspectors could improve safety. They can teach the importance of working safely to avoid injuries which impact not just the miner, but his family and employer as well. By placing emphasis on training and education instead of duplicating federal roles, the state's safety agency can help achieve the goal of "Zero fatalities."